

## **Virginia Council On Women**

### **Meeting Minutes**

**Friday, January 27, 2023**

(The meeting was held virtually via Microsoft Teams.)

Members Present: Ashley Reynolds Marshall, J.D., Chair; Kristina Hagen, Vice Chair; Aisha Johnson, Secretary; Mary Kate Andris; Katrina Chase; Pastor Valerie Coley; Alencia Johnson; Elizabeth Level; Georganne Long; Joley Mauck; Kara Moran; Teresa Pregnall; The Honorable Donna Price; and Anh Tu Do

Staff Present: Nikki Thacker, Chief Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth; and Gloria Senecal, Director of Board Administration; Justin Bell, Esq., Assistant Attorney General; and The Honorable Secretary John Littel

Others in Attendance: Kelley Powell, Community Advisor

Welcome, Call to Order, and Meeting Overview: Ms. Reynolds Marshall called the meeting to order at 12:46 p.m. Ms. Marshall shared meeting materials in the chat feature.

STEAM-H Updated and Discussion: Ms. Hagen led a discussion regarding the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual STEAM-H Essay Contest. The essay contest was live as of January 2023. The call for applications closes March 15, 2023. Winners will be announced April 28, 2023. A reception will be held in the Spring of 2023 to honor the winners. The date is to be determined. The current balance in the fundraising account is \$6,878.89. Donors from last year allowed funds to be carried over into the 2023 contest. The 501c3, CollabHERation, has been the fiscal agent in previous years. Ms. Moran made a motion to continue the partnership with CollabHERation as the fiscal agent. A second was given by Ms. Thacker. Ms. Hagen detailed the need to have roles filled for the current year contest. Roles needed include the following:

- Outreach Lead-Create outreach social media packet, create sample outreach e-mail, and essay workshop support and coordination.
- Fundraising Lead-Update fundraising packet, create/update fundraising e-mail, and review/update fundraising strategy.
- Essay Coordinator-Review essay requirements and web site materials, and recruitment and coordination of judges.

Promotional materials will be distributed after the Jan. 27, 2023 meeting. Ms. Marshall asked that Council Members share the scholarship information with local school systems. Ms. Mauck asked the amount of the fundraising

goal. Ms. Hagen stated that the goal is to exceed the fundraising amount from last year of \$50,000. Ms. Hagen is creating a fundraising Google document and will update the document weekly. Ms. Mauck commented in the chat feature that she will assist with fundraising.

August Meeting Minutes Approval, and January Agenda Adoption: The meeting minutes from Aug. 31, 2022 were unanimously approved after the addition to include Ms. Level's name in the virtual meeting attendance and the correction to Ms. Powell's title as Community Advisor. Ms. Powell submitted her correction by e-mail after the meeting was held. The January 27, 2023 meeting agenda was unanimously approved following a motion by Ms. Price and a second by Ms. Mauck.

Overview of Governors Report Meeting: Ms. Hagen and Ms. Moran gave the overview of the meeting held to discuss the Council's report with Governor Youngkin and members of his Cabinet. Governor Youngkin supports efforts to increase women's access to healthcare, including women in rural areas. He is also placing an increased focus on behavioral and mental health care. Ms. Mauck stated that she is continuing to foster a partnership with James Medical University. Concerns were expressed about the rural community being able to access an app on their mobile phones. Ms. Hagen and Ms. Moran requested that the Council help elevate the importance of mental and behavioral health awareness. Ms. Coley stated the importance of addressing first-time psychotic episodes. Virginia Commonwealth University is involved in mental health efforts. Law Enforcement Efforts would benefit from training to determine whether an individual should receive mental health treatment instead of charges. Ms. Marshall suggested requesting that Beth O'Connor, Executive Director of the Virginia Rural Health Association, continue the discussion about mental health access among women and girls, and reaching out to the Virginia Health Care Foundation.

FOIA Presentation: Justin Bell, Esq., Assistant Attorney General, conducted the FOIA Presentation. The Virginia Freedom of Information Action (FOIA) can be found under 2.2-3701 Code of Virginia. Virginia FOIA gives citizens access to public records. Council on Women documents and written communications are subject to Virginia FOIA. When a request is made the respondent has five business days to response. The response can include the following:

- More time is needed to respond.
- Provide the document(s) requested.
- Provide the document(s) requested with redaction.
- No documents will be provided.

The respondent can charge a fee to the citizen making the response. If the respondent is found guilty violating Virginia FOIA, the "bad actor" pays the fine, not the government entity. The citizen filing a Virginia FOIA request does not have to use "FOIA" in the request to make it a FOIA request. Council Members should assume all documents and e-mails related to the Council are public record. Meetings are open to the public and three or more Council Members communicating about public or Council business is considered a meeting. A gathering of three or more Council Members is not considered a meeting if no public or Council business is discussed. If a meeting is called, Ms. Senecal must be notified and Ms. Senecal will provide proper notice to the public. If a gift is offered to a Council Member, that member should contact Ms. Senecal to determine whether the gift is appropriate and could be accepted. No decisions can be made by e-mail if business is discussed by e-mail. Council members are encouraged to create separate e-mails for Council business, separate from their personal e-mails. The FOIA Advisory Council is a service free to all Council Members. Their contact information is 1-866-448-4100 and [foiacouncil@dls.virginia.gov](mailto:foiacouncil@dls.virginia.gov). The Council must have a FOIA Officer. Ms. Price moved to name Ms. Senecal the FOIA Officer. Ms. Hagen provided a second. The Council voted unanimously to make Ms. Senecal the FOIA Officer.

Board Administration Update: Ms. Senecal provided the Board Administration Update. In-person meetings must have a quorum to vote on business. All advisory boards to the Governor must follow the Code of Conduct. Council Members are reminded to complete their financial disclosures. Travel reimbursements are available when travel is required for meetings. If a member needs assistance completing a travel voucher, Ms. Senecal is available to assist. The next meeting will be held March 31, 2023 at City Space in Charlottesville. Subcommittee chairs and co-chairs are encouraged to utilize the Governor's staff as a resource when scheduling meetings and setting agendas for meetings. Ms. Senecal will e-mail a link for the Governor Youngkin's State of the Commonwealth Address. Ms. Aisha Johnson inquired whether subcommittee meetings can be held virtually. Ms. Senecal stated that they can, however when a virtual meeting is held of the Council the next Council and subcommittee meetings must be held in-person.

New Business: Ms. Marshall presented a report of new business. She discussed the Right Help, Right Now Bill, which addresses funding for mental health. She encouraged Council Members to attend other advisory board meetings. Ms. Aisha Johnson asked Ms. Senecal the timeline for recommendations made by the Council to Governor Youngkin. Ms. Senecal

stated that the current General Assembly session is not addressing new business, and new business will be addressed in the 2024 session.

Behavioral Health Speaker: The Honorable John Littel, Secretary of Health and Human Resources, led a discussion on behavioral and mental health. A discussion was held regarding the Council's efforts to partner with James Madison University. Council Members also discussed concerns regarding the exclusive use of an app to communicate with women and girls in rural areas since rural areas may lack appropriate broadband.

Secretary Littel discussed efforts by Governor Youngkin and his cabinet to address behavioral and mental health. Governor Youngkin often receives stories about breakdowns in the mental health system and increased substance use. The Bravo Initiative and Arts Program is an initiative designed to address access to substance use and mental health among Medicaid patients.

Project BRAVO is a multifaceted collaborative approach to enhancing the behavioral healthcare continuum across the lifespan for Medicaid members. Nine new behavioral health services launched in 2021 that strengthen crisis response, prevention, and early intervention to help members avoid inpatient admissions and find support in the community after a hospital stay. -<https://www.dmas.virginia.gov/providers/behavioral-health/enhancements/bravo-services-resources/>

System Transformation Excellence and Performance (STEP-VA), through the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, is addressing the levels of care. Historically the most severe crises received focus and a continuum of care was not put at the forefront.

Over the past five years, Virginia has made significant improvements in the quality and accountability of community services through legislative and administrative efforts. However, Virginia's overall behavioral health system remains underfunded and patched together in well-meaning responses to crises with services that are not always sustainable or consistently funded. Together with the Administration, the General Assembly and stakeholders, DBHDS is working to transform Virginia's system in a cohesive, strategic manner. - <https://dbhds.virginia.gov/developmental-services/step-va/>

The behavioral and mental health focus is being placed back on people and not primarily on institutions, and Virginia is learning about successful initiatives taken from other states. A focus is also being placed on prevention and re-entry into society after a behavioral or mental health

crisis. Arizona has implemented practices that could be duplicated in other states. The effort is to implement a crisis infrastructure that will continue in the future. This has informed the Right Help, Right Now initiative.

Governor Glenn Youngkin...unveiled his three-year plan to transform Virginia's behavioral health system, entitled "*Right Help, Right Now*." This is a six-pillared approach to address our behavioral health challenges, encompassing crisis care, law enforcement burden, substance use disorder support, behavioral health workforce and service delivery innovation. -

<https://www.governor.virginia.gov/newsroom/news-releases/2022/december/name-947166-en.html>

The \$660 million program focuses on crisis infrastructure and lifting the behavioral and mental health system. The program will fund 70 mobile crisis centers. This is designed to help alleviate stress on the system, which cause to issues such as wait lists for children with disabilities. Some individuals on the wait list are now adults with aging parents. Ms. Marshall mentioned the Marcus Alert, which was created to "ensure that the emergency response to a behavioral health crisis is a behavioral health response...with coordination at state, regional, and local levels." (<https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/DHS/Behavioral-Healthcare-Home/Marcus-Alert>)

Committee Discussions: The Education Equity Committee discussion was held earlier in the meeting agenda. The Health Equity Committee also discussed its actions earlier in the meeting agenda. Due to time constraints the Civic Engagement and Workforce Equity Committees did not present a report.

Closing Remarks and Announcements: The next meeting is scheduled for March 31, 2023 at City-Space in Charlottesville. This is not a virtual meeting.

The meeting was adjourned on a unanimous vote following a motion by Ms. Price with a second from Ms. Coley.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Aisha Johnson, Secretary  
Virginia Council on Women